

Case 2131

***Asterias squamata* Delle Chiaje, 1828 (currently *Amphipholis squamata*; Echinodermata, Ophiuroidea): proposed conservation of the specific name**

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Abstract. The purpose of this application is the conservation of the specific name *squamata* Delle Chiaje, 1828, of a littoral brittlestar, by the suppression of its unused senior synonym *Ophiura elegans* Leach, 1815.

1. I have pointed out (Clark, 1970, pp. 30–31) that it is likely that the species from a rocky shore in south Devon described by Leach in 1815 (p. 59) as *Ophiura elegans* is conspecific with the cosmopolitan littoral ophiuroid generally known since about 1900 as *Amphipholis squamata* (Delle Chiaje, 1828 (p. 77)). The specific name *squamata* was used by the important nineteenth century specialists Müller & Troschel (1842), M. Sars (1861) and Lyman (1882, p. 136).

2. Due to the unexpectedly wide distribution of this species, no unanimity was reached prior to 1900 and indeed several other names were proposed, including *Ophiura neglecta* Johnston, 1835; *O. moniliformis* Grube, 1840; *Ophiolepis tenuis* Ayres, 1851; *Amphiura tenera* Lutken, 1859; *Amphipholis lineata* Ljungman, 1871; *A. kinbergi* Ljungman, 1871 and *A. appressa* Ljungman, 1871.

3. *Amphipholis* Ljungman, 1867a (p. 164) was initially a monotypic genus with *A. januarii* alone. Since Ljungman's short paper with diagnoses of new taxa was published in the June part of the *Ofversigt*, while his comprehensive review of OPHIUROIDEA (1867b), where several other species (p. 311–315) besides *elegans* (with synonym *squamata*) were also included in *Amphipholis*, was not published until December of the same year, Thomas (1966, p. 831) in a paper revising the American species of *Amphipholis*, has restricted the genus to *A. januarii* Ljungman, 1867, and designated *Asterias squamata* Delle Chiaje, 1828 as type species of a new nominal genus *Axiognathus*. The distinction between them was based only on non-superficial characters still to be tested as of generic weight in the family AMPHIURIDAE, and the name *Axiognathus* has not so far been appraised by other echinoderm specialists.

4. In view of this proposed change in the generic name, the frequency of the species throughout the world and its viviparous habit and luminosity which make *Amphipholis squamata* 'the most widely mentioned amphiuroid brittlestar in scientific literature' (Thomas, 1966, p. 831), it is particularly important that the specific name be stabilized.

5. Because of the inadequacy of the information provided by Leach (1815) to establish the identity of *Ophiura elegans*, the absence of extant type material and the fact that *Amphipholis squamata* has been widely used (a list of representative references is held by

the Commission Secretariat) it is requested that the Commission suppress the name *A. elegans* (Leach, 1815), despite its priority.

6. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is accordingly asked:

- (1) to use its plenary powers to suppress the specific name *elegans* Leach, 1815, as published in the binomen *Ophiura elegans*, for the purposes of the Principle of Priority but not for those of the Principle of Homonymy;
- (2) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the name *squamata* Delle Chiaje, 1828, as published in the binomen *Asterias squamata*;
- (3) to place on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Specific Names in Zoology the name *elegans* Leach, 1815, as published in the binomen *Ophiura elegans* and as suppressed in (1) above.

References

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